



WFP Lebanon Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022) Proposal to the Government of Belgium

Country:	Lebanon
Executing Agency	World Food Programme Lebanon
Project Title:	Country Strategic Plan (2018-2021); Strategic Outcome 1
Total Budget of Proposal:	EUR 1,000,000
Project sites:	Nationwide Lebanon
Estimated Number of Beneficiaries:	Approximately 4,616 vulnerable Lebanese individuals with emergency food assistance using in-kind food commodities
Project Duration:	12 months

1. Description of context

In the years preceding the immense economic downturn that has affected Lebanon starting in 2019, high levels of extreme poverty and food insecurity were serious concerns primarily for the Syrian refugee population hosted by Lebanon. The situation, however, changed in 2020 when rising prices and the economic recession, compounded by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, hit all population groups in Lebanon, including boys, girls, men, women, the elderly and the disabled. The World Bank has declared the current economic crisis in Lebanon in the top three of the most severe crises globally. The alarming pace of currency devaluation and inflation since October 2019 has impoverished over half the Lebanese population and almost the entire Syrian refugee population and threatens to push many more into poverty.

Food access and availability have become major issues, with food prices out of reach for most, and retailers facing serious challenges to restock and to keep their businesses afloat. Food imports and food production have been negatively affected by liquid cash limitations and limited credits by the banks. As affordable food items become scarce, competition for basic resources and social tensions are on the rise too. The ongoing discontinuation of subsidies has fuelled increased social tensions, particularly over affordable food items, medicines, and fuel. The steady deterioration of all basic economic instruments is threatening the ability of markets to function and the delivery of social assistance and services, including relief assistance.

An adequate response is urgently needed to protect the livelihoods and dignity of the most vulnerable. Food security and basic needs, alongside health and nutrition, stand out as priority areas for emergency assistance aimed at mitigating and preventing damaging effects on the poorest and most vulnerable.

2. Needs analysis

In the beginning of 2021, food insecurity was estimated at 20 percent among the Lebanese population, while at 50 percent among the Syrian refugees, and 33 percent among the refugees of other nationalities. However,

recent market developments have revealed that these estimates have increased. Furthermore, based on World Bank projections, WFP estimates that 35 percent of the Lebanese population are living in extreme poverty in 2021 – an increase from 22 percent in 2020 – while 90 percent of Syrian refugees are extremely poor.

A major driver of macroeconomic instability is the significant currency depreciation and heavy fluctuations in the USD exchange rate in the parallel market, which experiences heavy fluctuations on a daily basis and reached LBP 22,000 to the dollar in July 2021. Meanwhile, the price of the food portion of the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) reached LBP 268,258 in June 2021, which is an increase by over 400 percent since the start of the crisis in October 2019.

The poorest households are usually compelled to reduce their investments in food, education, upskilling technical training, and health, leaving them vulnerable to future shocks. For instance, the share of households adopting food consumption coping strategies has been continuously increasing over time. Restricting the consumption of adults in favour of children - the most severe consumption-based coping strategy – continues to increase where half of the households reported using this coping strategy¹. During March-April 2021, more than 60 percent of the Lebanese households were applying crisis coping strategies. During the same period, 58 percent of the surveyed respondents stated having food shortages. Employment levels decreased by nearly 8 percent compared to January 2021, reflecting the volatile labour market conditions and potential adverse impact of the lockdown measures on employment prospects from the beginning of 2021.

The strategic focus amongst the humanitarian community in Lebanon is on adapting response strategy to the context and establishing a “humanitarian safety net”, a response that focuses on effective, efficient, and sustainable assistance for refugees and vulnerable Lebanese. Considering the challenges in Lebanon which have eroded people’s ability to afford food, shelter, and healthcare across all populations, there is a need for expanding and substantially scaling-up humanitarian assistance in the country. WFP’s role in providing life-saving food assistance in Lebanon has shifted since 2019 to no longer solely be aimed towards refugees, but also to support the affected Lebanese population.

3. Rationale and linkages

3.1 Rationale for intervention

WFP, with its in-depth experience in the humanitarian space, is proactively working with the Government, donors, UN and other partners to strengthen its response in the country to protect the most vulnerable in the short and mid-term, including through an emergency safety net. WFP is significantly scaling-up its delivery of life-saving emergency food assistance to individuals affected by the economic and COVID-19 crises, as well as tripling its assistance to vulnerable Lebanese through the Minister of Social Affairs-led National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP) and increasing assistance to refugees, to provide sustainable assistance to families most in need. With advance-planning, monitoring, and by providing flexible solutions, WFP is ready to adapt to the situation and ensure beneficiaries receive much-needed assistance.

¹ m-VAM Vulnerability and Food Security Assessment – March - April 2021

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020/2021, direct food assistance using in-kind food commodities was chosen as the transfer modality for WFP's initial emergency food response to mitigate the risk that people would not be able to access shops or ATMs due to lockdown measures. WFP started providing emergency food assistance through food parcels in the end of 2020 for six months until April 2021 and reached up to approximately 50,000 vulnerable Lebanese families (250,000 people) affected by the COVID-19 and economic crises.

WFP had initially planned to scale-up cash-based transfer assistance following the in-kind distributions as this mechanism was already established and cash-based transfers was considered the primary modality of assistance to boost the local economy, support recovery, and meet basic needs. However, considering the current grave state of the Lebanese economy, market functionality, and rising food prices, WFP decided to extend the direct food assistance using the in-kind food modality to mitigate the risks of market volatility and threats to food availability and access. The provision of food parcels helps counter the impact of inflation and decreased purchasing power for families, freeing up resources to cover their other basic needs, such as medicine, rent, and education. The in-kind commodities also ensures that finite resources are maximized, especially given the continuing exchange rate fluctuations. WFP started to gradually scale up its in-kind food assistance in June 2021, aiming to reach 100,000 vulnerable families (400,000 people) by October 2021 onwards. WFP aims to continue the in-kind food support to vulnerable Lebanese until June 2022.

It is within this context that WFP proposes to allocate the Euro 1 million from the Belgian contribution to support 4,616 vulnerable Lebanese beneficiaries for 12 months through direct emergency food assistance using in-kind commodities. The support from the Government of Belgium will help save lives and improve food access for the most economically vulnerable Lebanese. The proposal will support Strategic Outcome 1 under the CSP, with focus on crisis-affected host populations to have access to lifesaving, nutritious and affordable food throughout the year.

3.2 Linkages with national priorities and SDGs

Lebanon's national priorities related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were established at the High-Level Political Forum in 2018 when the country carried out its last Voluntary National Review. While Lebanon has shown exceptional solidarity by temporarily hosting 1.5 million displaced from Syria, this has come at a high cost, compounding pre-existing development challenges, and stretching Lebanon beyond its limits. The country is still facing development challenges, including on poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. People are at the core of the government's SDG focus, however the communities hosting the majority of the displaced lack the resources and capacities to address the increased demand on public and social services. The government's efforts towards creating a better environment for all focuses on national programs that enhance social assistance packages for the most vulnerable Lebanese, such as the National Poverty Targeting Program implemented by WFP, and to provide education for all through the Reaching All Children with Education Program.

In 2018, WFP started implementing its activities under the Lebanon [Country Strategic Plan 2018-2022](#). The Country Strategic Plan is aligned with the [Lebanon Crisis Response Plan](#), which has been endorsed by the Government of Lebanon, and the [Ministry of Agriculture's Strategy](#). Following the deterioration of Lebanon's economic situation, WFP, together with NGO co-lead Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development and other Food Security Sector partners, has prepared an [Emergency Response Plan](#) which will address the

significant additional needs among vulnerable Lebanese and migrants, who are not covered by the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan. The programmatic framework for this response has been designed to be complementary to the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan and the coordination architecture will be adapted to the evolving situation and needs. WFP's emergency food assistance through in kind food commodities is reflected in the Emergency Response Plan and therefore, the funding from Belgium under this proposal for direct emergency food assistance will contribute to the needs under the Emergency Response Plan.

WFP's Country Strategic Plan in Lebanon focuses on four strategic outcomes to address the ongoing humanitarian and developmental challenges and supports the Government of Lebanon in achieving SDG 2 on zero hunger, SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals, and SDG 4 on quality education. WFP aims to achieve zero hunger by 2030, and the activities and humanitarian interventions proposed in this proposal will directly contribute to SDG 2 and SDG 17.

4. Programme targeting, implementation, and coordination

Targeting:

In accordance with WFP's Humanitarian Protection Policy, design, targeting, and implementation will be informed by beneficiaries' needs and participation activity. WFP's targeting approach for households affected by the economic crisis relies on a socio-economical vulnerability and food security assessments, as well as considers gender-based vulnerabilities.

The targeting indicators cover the following areas:

- Demographics: female-headed households, age of the head of household, and condition of household
- Shelter and type of occupancy
- Income: permanent or not, reduction of income, assistance from (I)NGO or Government
- Health: household with no medical coverage of any type
- Food Consumption
- Household coping strategies in situations of stress

The vulnerability assessment data is collected through phone calls and WFP runs the analysis and the scoring, which ensures there is transparency and coherence in the targeting approach throughout the country. The result of the vulnerability assessment of each household using a scoring system based on this data determines if they are eligible for assistance. A web-based self-registration form developed by WFP has also been used to ensure maximum outreach. To ensure those most in need are reached, WFP employed household targeting through a questionnaire designed based on the results of the WFP web-based survey and the m-VAM survey conducted jointly with the World Bank.

Ration and composition of the food basket:

Households will receive in-kind food assistance delivered as a monthly family food ration designed to provide 1,665 kcal per person per day for a family of five, which represents nearly 80 percent of the full individual energy requirement of 2,100 kcal per person per day. As WFP will be distributing a single-family ration size on a monthly basis and considering that the full energy requirement varies depending on sex and age, WFP deemed this slightly reduced ration size to be sufficient and appropriate, and also easily transportable by

partners and beneficiaries alike – the full basket of nearly 63 kg is divided into two carton boxes and one large bag. This ration also assumes that families have access to the remaining 20 percent of their requirements through other means.

The composition of the food basket was designed to optimize nutritional value while keeping reasonable weight and cost-efficient procurement expenses. The ration covers dry items as well as items that can withstand difficult storage conditions. The food basket is composed as follows:

Commodity	Family monthly ration (kg)	Quantity per person per day (g)
Rice	10	67
Chickpeas	10	67
Pasta	10	67
Bulgur	10	67
Lentils	7	47
Beans	7	47
Tuna cans	1.92	13
Oil (sunflower)	6	40
Salt	1	7
Total	62.92	422

Safe and dignified distributions

The choice of transfer modality of food assistance is based on solid programmatic and operational analyses, including the functionality of markets, cost effectiveness, mitigation of unwanted effects, speed of deployment and multiplier effects on the economy. The in-kind food parcels will be procured locally to shorten lead-times, with minimal impact on food availability on the local market. Logistics capacity and warehouse facilities will also be augmented to ensure proper storage is available, and shortlisted transporters will also undertake delivery of the parcels to the storage facilities of WFP partners.

WFP follows its global guidance on protection to ensure a do no harm approach in the implementation of activities, and WFP and partner staff are on the ground at each distribution to ensure the safety and dignity of families receiving assistance. Distributions follow the [“Interim recommendations for adjusting food distribution standard operating procedures in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak \(Version 2, March 2020\)”](#), an interim guidance developed by WFP and endorsed by the Inter Agency Standing Committee Principles. The recommendations aim at minimizing the risk of COVID-19 exposure for implementing partners and beneficiaries alike. Distributions are staged to avoid crowding and where possible, distributions will be conducted in cooperation with other partners from other sectors distributing hygiene kits and providing awareness sessions for beneficiaries. Consultations will be undertaken with local authorities to guarantee that partners have safe access to areas of intervention.

Partnerships:

WFP works with cooperating partners to support the implementation of the in-kind food assistance. As part of scoping and selecting cooperating partners, WFP carries out a comprehensive capacity and risk assessment, to assess compliance, commitment to humanitarian principles, and operational and financial capacity. The selection process is competitive, and selections are made based on optimizing operational footprints, cost-sharing with other agencies, and flexibility in expanding activities, among other. In 2020-2021, WFP cooperating partners include Caritas Lebanon, the Lebanese Organisation for Studies and Training (LOST), Development, Culture and Leadership (DCL), Social, Humanitarian, and Economic Intervention for Local Development (SHIELD) and World Vision International. Partners are responsible for validation monitoring, distribution of food parcels, and activities such as process and outcome monitoring.

Communication with beneficiaries:

Beneficiaries are fully informed of the source of their entitlements through regular communication activities undertaken by WFP. This includes information-sharing during household monitoring visits and the regular retargeting exercise, as well as through visibility in the field where WFP shares information via WFP posters that contain partner and donor logos. Other means of communication and visibility include SMS messages, press releases, and social media, among other.

WFP is in the process of setting up a centralised call centre that can be used by beneficiaries to register their views, provide feedback, and record complaints. The call centre will allow beneficiaries to obtain information on WFP assistance and receive more specific information on their individual case. This mechanism for processing inquiries ensures that beneficiaries' feedback and complaints are duly received, acknowledged, addressed, and feed into the direct food assistance programme quality. WFP's efforts will be augmented by partner complaint and feedback mechanisms such as hotlines, helpdesks, and specific focal points. This will afford beneficiaries a variety of convenient and trusted channels that meet the preference of persons with specific needs - gender, age and disability.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

Following its Corporate Results Framework, WFP uses a Results Based Management approach to monitor activities and their efficiency and effectiveness in achieving outputs and outcome results. Emergency food assistance using in-kind commodities will be subject to regular process monitoring and outcome monitoring undertaken on a regular basis through WFP field offices. Process monitoring is conducted through regular WFP field monitor visits to distribution sites for food parcel distributions to ensure programme implementation and beneficiaries' ability to utilize their assistance.

Outcome monitoring is conducted three to four times per year by cooperating partners, currently through phone calls due to COVID-19 restrictions, however when/if the sanitary situation allows, through household visits to understand the beneficiaries' experience with receiving assistance, and any feedback or issues they might have experienced. The questionnaire follows the standard WFP outcome monitoring tools, which includes general demographic information about the households, household food consumption, coping

strategies used, expenditures, debts, and protection-related questions, including the process for redemption of assistance.

WFP conducts post-distribution monitoring and qualitative interviews to ensure that distributions run smoothly and to assess beneficiary feedback, preferences, and food security outcomes. In addition, WFP is launching a new call centre in 2021 for vulnerable Lebanese to enhance accountability and ensure that families receiving assistance can provide their feedback and concerns, as well as inquire about the assistance.

WFP will continue its market monitoring including monitoring the impact of inflation of commodity prices and potential impact of the removal of subsidies from key commodities through regular price monitoring.

WFP and the World Bank are working together to collect and monitor data for timely analysis and assessment of households' vulnerability, food security, and livelihood status through mVAM. WFP is also working on a Lebanese Vulnerability Assessment Panel (LVAP), jointly with the World Bank and UNHCR, for a more in-depth accurate picture of the changing economic and social situation, including poverty and food insecurity, amongst Lebanese and non-Lebanese. The LVAP will allow WFP and World Bank to estimate household poverty rates using international poverty lines as well as evaluate the opportunities, vulnerabilities, and risks, which will inform WFP programmes and the World Bank social assistance.

WFP and the World Bank also continue coordinating with the Government of Lebanon and partners to assess and further monitor the impact of the crisis on households, including access to adequate and nutritious diets and healthcare services.

6. Reporting and visibility

Reporting: WFP publishes the Annual Country Report (ACR) by the end of the first quarter every year for each of its operations. If confirmed, this contribution will be officially reported in the 2021 ACR, expected to be published by the end of Q1 2022, and the 2022 ACR, which is expected to be published by the end of Q1 2023. The ACR is the principle means through which WFP informs donors of how resources for given projects were obtained, utilised and accounted for during the preceding year. The report will be available at the following address: <https://www.wfp.org/operations>. In addition, WFP Lebanon proposes to share regular updates on the projects including monthly briefings and situation reports, etc.

Visibility: WFP is committed to pursuing its donor visibility strategy to acknowledge the contribution and thank the people of Belgium for their generosity. To showcase the positive impact of Belgium's assistance, WFP's communications department will produce timely and quality content and visibility products such as:

- **Social media posts:** posts will tag Belgium's official accounts on social media and will range from photos, to infographics to videos. The aim of the posts will be to convey Belgium's contributions through a human-centric way, bringing forward stories that do not necessarily always mention assistance directly but instead focus on humanising communities by amplifying their voices and featuring 'relatable' narratives. Posts on announcing and acknowledging the contribution will also be made.

- **Media mentions:** Belgium’s contributions will be mentioned when conducting media interviews (if and when possible).
- **Field visits:** organizing joint visits to specific sites across Lebanon, whether simply with donors or with media accompanying the team. However, the sensitivity of the situation in Lebanon (e.g. COVID-19, economic crisis, riots, etc.) must be taken into consideration before moving forward with any on-site visits and visibility.
- **On-site visibility:** The Government of Belgium’s logo will be placed on visibility materials as appropriate, including on food parcels along with other donors.

7. Budget

Activity Costs Summary	USD	EUR
Transfer	1,081,642	906,416
Implementation Costs	21,633	18,128
Direct Operating Costs (DOC)	1,103,275	924,544
Direct Support Costs (DSC)	17,211	14,423
Total Direct Costs	1,120,486	938,967
Indirect Support Cost (ISC)	72,832	61,033
Grant Total Activity Costs	1,193,317	1,000,000